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of insufficient traffic. The average freight rate in tropical Africa appears to be about four cents per ton-mile, but in some cases rates rise as high as seventeen cents per ton-mile.

The greatest difficulty in the development of railroads in the tropics, as in that of industry in general, is the indolence and poverty of the natives. In the construction of the railroads it has been found difficult to obtain a sufficient number of employees willing to work, and it is characteristic of the spirit in which the difficulties of tropical colonization are being met that Professor Meyer suggests that the construction of railroads should be by forced, though paid, labor. This labor, he says, is not slavery, which he describes as compulsory work intended to serve the personal selfish aims of the employer, but he regards it in the same light as compulsory school attendance or compulsory military service, and as a necessary step toward the attainment and preservation of public cultural advantages.

The work of Professor Meyer will be of value to persons interested in the development of tropical colonies. There is appended an excellent map of Africa with its existing and proposed railroads.

WALTER E. WEYL.

UNIVERSITY SETTLEMENT,
New York City.

Die Akkordarbeit in Deutschland. By LUDWIG BERNHARD.
Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1903. 8vo, pp. vii + 237.

THE author uses *Akkordarbeit* in so broad a sense that it is difficult to find an English equivalent for it. Every form of wage payment based upon results rather than upon the time employed is included in the term: piece-work and task-work in their various forms, the premium system, and profit-sharing, all come within the author's survey, though not to receive the same measure of attention.

The first part traces the development of *Akkordarbeit* during the nineteenth century in England and on the continent. Down to 1830 the tendency in England was to displace time-wages with piece-wages, but piece-wages under a vicious boss system which enabled a small contractor to secure the advantages of the method for himself without sharing them with the workers he employed usually for time-wages. In fact, the laborers suffered all the evils of the sweating system. The conditions in England during the first few decades after the industrial revolution began—the general employment of

women and children, the inability of men in large numbers to adapt themselves to machine work, etc. — were favorable for the maintenance of a class of sub-contractors. After the repeal, 1824, of the combination laws, the laborers began a sharp conflict with the system under which they were working; parliamentary inquiries made clear its evils; the prosperity of English industry, due in part to the enlarged demands of America during the thirties for British goods, and, more than all, the continued development of the division of labor, aided the laborers, and the system gave way to time-wages, or a higher form of *Akkordarbeit*.

Somewhat the same course of development is traced in France and Germany. While the system was not unknown in Germany at an earlier date, its wider use was not introduced until the forties, when it was generally employed in railway construction. It came into very general use also in farming; and from these industries it spread to the building trades and to the slowly developing factories. In the factories and building trades the form adopted was the discredited one from England — the *Zwischenmeistersystem*.

In the second part the author gives an account of the agitation against the *Akkordsystem* in France and Germany. He reviews the well-known opposition of Louis Blanc and Marx to piece-wages on principle, and the more recent agitation which has been carried on as a part of the workingmen's movement for improved conditions of labor. While apparently, at times at least, there was a wholesale condemnation of the *Akkordsystem*, in the main the author believes it has been really aimed only at the abuses of the system in its worst form — that which employs the middleman. An examination of the development and the present situation (of which but few details are given) of the system as employed among the stone-masons, bricklayers, stone-cutters, wood-workers, miners, printers, textile-workers, and metal-workers, leads the author to the conclusion that *Akkordarbeit* has become a permanent feature of the wage system, and that the old *Zwischenmeistertum* must entirely give way to a form of piece-wages, or of task-wages, in which the whole group concerned shall be sharers.

The more theoretical consideration of the problem in the third part of the book leads the author to the conclusion that the tendencies observed are economically sound. *Gruppenakkord* — the employment of several interested in the outcome of the same piece of work, all sharing in an agreed proportion of the reward for it — represents,

all things social and economic considered, the highest evolution of the wage system.

Although the author has been in living touch with the system he describes, and although his method of treatment has the external appearance of a very logical division of his theme, the book, it must be said, leaves the reader with a less clear picture of actual conditions in Germany than could be wished. The chief criticism one would care to pass upon the book is that it contains rather too much generalization and theory, and not enough of detail.

GEORGE O. VIRTUE.

WINONA, MINN.

The Adjustment of Wages: A Study in the Coal and Iron Industries of Great Britain and America. By W. J. ASHLEY.

London: Longmans, Green & Co. 8vo, pp. xv + 362.

EIGHT university lectures—delivered early in 1903 at Oxford constitute the text of Professor Ashley's economic study in practical methods of adjusting wages in the coal and iron industries of Great Britain and America. The author's prolonged residence in this country prior to acceptance of his present appointment as professor of commerce in the University of Birmingham, England, has made him familiar with economic conditions here, and afforded him exceptional opportunities for comparative study of British and American industrial institutions. These lectures are mainly descriptive of labor conditions in the two great industries considered, with especial reference to the organization of labor, the constitution of boards of conciliation, and the negotiation of wage-compacts under a joint-agreement system. The coal-mining industry is dealt with at considerable length in the first six lectures; in Lecture VII British boards of conciliation and sliding-scale arrangements in the iron industry are taken up more briefly and contrasted with American methods and means of wage-adjustment. The final lecture is devoted to some account of the "Legal Position of Trade Unions," as defined in recent court decisions. Approximately one-half of the 362 pages are devoted to appendices, wherein some account is given of the chief sources of information regarding the coal-mining and iron industries in both countries, together with the rules of the various British conciliation boards, texts of joint agreements and sliding scales—among other documents the report and awards of the Anthracite Coal Strike Commission. This is all valuable material.